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THEODOR STORMS BRIEFE AN FRIEDRICH EGGERS
MIT EINER LEBENSKIZZE VON F. EGGERS UND
GEDICHTPROBEN. Herausgegeben von H. Wolfgang
Seidel. 1911. Berlin, Karl Curtius.

THEODOR STORMS LYRIK. Von Walther Hermann.
R. Voightländers Verlag in Leipzig. 1911.

Since the death of Theodor Storm in 1888 scholars have slowly and surely become interested in his life. He has not had numberless books written about him, his influence in German literature and life is not enormous and sweeping enough, but scholarly interest in his life and works has so steadily increased, that he is becoming more and more a subject for serious study and biographical details are important enough to be published and edited. To an already very large list of the published letters to Emil Kuh, Mörike, Keller, the Esmarchs, Hans Speker, Oscar Horn, Dr. Foglar, Ada Christen, the "Briefe in die Heimat" and a considerable number of others which would have to be enumerated if one were making a complete bibliography, there is added now another collection in book-form "Theodor Storms Briefe an Friedrich Eggers."

Before discussing this book another short collection of 9 letters should be referred to. In Westermanns Monatshefte of August, 1911 there are letters which Storm wrote to members of the family Scherff published with a general introduction and interspersed notes by Prof. Dr. Werner Deetjen. The family Scherff of Altona was related to Storm on Mrs. Scherff's side, who was the daughter of Frau Alsen, the daughter of a sister of Storm's grandfather Woldsen. This bond of union might possibly have kept the two families in touch with each other and have brought Storm and his family every year to Altona, but there was still another tie beside that of relationship, their common love of music. Ludwig Scherff, son of this family composed a very beautiful melody for Storms "Oktoberlied" and when Scherff visited Storm in his exile from his native Schleswig-Holstein in 1863, Storm's "Gesangverein" sang for Scherff one of his own musical compositions. The letters contain a story of his family life, of his love for his children, of his love of music, etc. There is a passage which speaks of Hoffmann's *Magnetiseur*, once more substantiating the fact that Storm loved the stories of the grotesque Romanticist. There is another passage which relates how Storm read "Schön Hedwig" by Hebbel "mit Schumannscher Musik" to cultivate the art sense among his fel-

low citizens of Hademarschen, the "Bauern," and still another of a visit of Paul Heyse. In a concluding note Deetjen accounts for the pessimistic attitude of Storm in his later life by his great grief over the loss of his oldest son. He thinks this pessimism was disclosed, when Storm wrote into the autograph album of a young lady the well known verses

Dunkle Zypressen —
Die Welt is gar zu lustig;
Es wird doch alles vergessen.

The letters to Eggers are not to be compared in value to the letters of Storm to Kuh 1889-1890, to Storm's Briefe an Mörike, the Storm-Keller Briefwechsel 1903-1904, Briefe in die Heimat, 1907. The chief interest lies in Eggers, as a member of the "Tunnel" Club and the inner circle of this club, the "Rütli," as a lyric poet who wrote some things which Storm looked upon as well done, and as the "Leiter des deutschen Kunstblattes, 1850-1858." The letters have been edited by H. Wolfgang Seidel carefully on the whole; there are a few things which might have been annotated. He might have said something about the "Jakob Beckerschen Bildern." It may be that Jakob Becker is well known, but that is open to serious doubt. A number of other similar things might have been annotated with advantage to the reader and student. The letters to Eggers cover about the same period as the "Briefe in die Heimat." The first letter falls into the year 1853. The last letter is dated 1869. They have been printed through the kindness of the owner, Frau Senatorin Eggers in Rostock. They throw light on the personality of Storm and add some interesting utterances on the theory of poetry. The friends most often mentioned are: Fontane, Heyse, Kugler; the "Tunnel" and "Rütli" meetings are given a good deal of space, the "Argo," a belletristic annual, of which the argonauts were Kugler, Eggers, Heyse, Fontane and others, and in which in 1854, 1857, 1859, 1860 Storm published poems and novels, and also the "Kunst und Literaturblatt" of which Eggers was the editor. In the first letter Storm makes a facetious remark about the very unpopular sale of his books "Wie brilliant es mit dem buchhändlerischen Vertrieb meiner Gedichte geht, erfuhr ich vorige Woche in Altona; es war noch *kein* Exemplar verkauft, was mich denn durchaus nicht wunderte." The poem "Mysterium" which was sent to Eggers is no longer to be found.

The most important letter of the whole collection, from which valuable quotations can be made is the second letter "Husum, Sonntag Morgen, den 13 März." Storm discusses there the questionableness of the theme of incest for a lyric poem and suggests how it should be treated, if it were chosen.

To Menzel's criticism, that in Storm's writing "Phantasie" outweighs "Gefühl," Storm's answer is: "Das ist gewisz unrichtig. Aber es ist eine Kunstforderung für mich dasz das Gefühl sich nur durch das *medium* der Phantasie aussprechen dürfe. Die drei Faktoren der Poesie sind: Gedanke, Bild, Gefühl. Es musz alles drei immer beisammen sein-." In the same letter he states that there is an ethical factor in "Abseits," "im Walde," etc., that the poem "Abseits" was not intended merely as a description of the heath, but rather as the poetic impression which the heath made upon him. It is this impression that gives the poem its unity. In another part of the letter he discusses the use of figurative language. He does not believe in seeking after figures, it makes the mental process too prominent and weakens the poetic picture. He designates the work of imagination in poetry as an "in Scenesetzen des Gedankens." He does not reject the use of the figure but avoids it because as he says "es führt überdies direct zur Phrase." Storm is piqued at Menzel's omission of any reference to his poetry, he thinks it an indication of Menzel's old age. Storm in this letter refers to his verses as "das originalste unter meinen Sachen." They are not to be compared to the love relation which exists between the unconscious boy and girl, "es sind keine Frühlingslieder, sondern voll erschlossene Liebesrosen." The summer mood of the descriptive poetry runs parallel with the summer mood in the love poems. The characteristic thing about this poetry is, that Storm has accomplished what Heyse at that time was unable to do "das Sinnliche von der Erde loslösen und gehörig durchgeistigen."

Letters 4 and 12 contain valuable theoretic material. In letter 4 Storm asserts that Mörike was the first to give the "Idyll" a real poetic content. In letter 12 there is a discussion of the "Idee im Märchen," an illustration of what Storm means by "sinnliche Mitempfindung" and a criticism of Journalisten and Allegory in Art. One quotation from letter 4 is especially valuable: "Seit der Periode des ersten Buchs der Gedichte habe ich fest darauf gehalten nichts zu schreiben, was ich nicht mit meiner Persönlichkeit vertreten könnte, was nicht im Verhältnisz zu mir aus einer gewissen Nothwendigkeit entsprungen wäre. . . . Es ist in der That dies Versemaachen, blosz um etwas zu Markt zu bringen, etwas eines Mannes so Unwürdiges dasz es nicht zu oft und nicht zu hart zurückgewiesen werden kann."

The most intelligent article that has been written on the work of Storm appears in three different numbers of the *Euphoriion*, under the title, "Mimische Studien zu Theodor Storm, von J. Vlasimský in Prag." The import of the whole study is to show that in the description of his characters

Storm dwells upon the gestures of the hand and the movements of the eye. The hand plays the most important role. Lena Wies accompanies the telling of a story with certain gestures of the hand. The hand is used to heighten the vividness of the person and the action. Reinhardt raises his hand in Immense to tell which way the wind blew. The gesture of stretching out both arms or hands is one that made a deep impression upon Storm when he saw it, and he applies it to his characters. He describes the habit of a pastor who moved his hand, as if he were moving it over the pulpit in the delivery of a sermon. Another man "liesz die Hand wie eine Puppe gegen sich auf und abknixen."

In one number of the *Euphoriön* Vlasimský confines himself exclusively to the discussion of the "Händedruck." A passage from Storm will show the significance and the importance of this study. "Ein nahe Verhältnis fand während meiner Jugend zwischen mir und meinen Eltern nicht statt. Ich entsinne mich nicht, dass ich derzeit jemals von ihnen umarmt oder geküsst worden wäre. Wir im Norden gehen überhaupt nicht oft über den Händedruck hinaus." "Sie werden die Worte, Liebe, Kuss etc. fast gar nicht in meinen Schriften finden." The passages containing variations of the gesture of the "Händedruck" have been carefully collected and compared. Obviously, this gesture is a personal and perchance a national Frisian peculiarity. It is especially frequent and effective in the "Schimmelreiter," which more than any other short story has taken up the Frisian "Erdgeruch" and local color. The lovers in this story do not speak of love a single time, they do not kiss a single time, but the "Händedruck" is made to express their regard for each other at least 12 times. It St. Jürgen the aged Harre Jensen returning from the south to visit his old sweetheart Agnes Hansen grips and presses the hand of his young friend as the church tower of St. Jürgen rises into view. A study of Storm's correspondence with Keller reveals the fact that there are many variations of the thought "Ich drücke Ihnen herzlich die Hand" as a token of Storm's friendship for Keller whom he never saw. This gesture is never employed by Keller. Incidentally V. combats very effectively the statement of R. M. Meyer. "Storm ist vielleicht der erste, der—die kultivierte Psychologie der Hand in die Erzählung eingeführt hat" and proves conclusively that this honor ought to be given to Heinrich Heine. The third and last portion of V.'s article as it appears in the *Euphoriön* deals with the "Mimik des Auges." He uses this artifice to reflect the same moods of his characters. The illustrations are so numerous that a few examples taken at random must suffice. "Sie konnten sich anschauen

mit unendlichem Groll, aber mit noch unendlicherem Schmerz;" "Er verlor sich stumm in ihren Augen, sie stand ihm gegenüber, ohne Regung.....nur in ihren Augen im tiefsten Grunde, rührte sich die Seele; er wusste nicht was ihn anschaute." "Sie sah an ihm vorbei in die Ferne;" "er sah gespannt in die Ferne."

Walther Hermann's book on Theodor Storm is a report on Theodor Storm's lyric poetry written for Prof. Köster's Seminar. After settling upon the chronological order of the poems, from Storm's works, manuscripts, first printed versions, letters and internal evidence H. has tried to work out the story of the evolution of Storm's lyric poetry and Storm's theory of the lyric and his creative method. He has added an appendix which contains in addition to the chronological order of the poems already mentioned, a bibliography supplementary to that found in the second edition of Schütze's Storm biography, a list of magazine editions in which his poems were first published with the dates, chronological list of variant readings, deviations of the new texts from the "Ausgabe letzter Hand" and an index of the poems.

We can pass over quickly Hermann's remarks on Storm's early attempts at poetry, and the influence of Schiller, Eichendorff and Heine; his remarks on "das Liederbuch dreier Freunde" do not give us any important information. Hermann tries to prove, (he cannot prove it conclusively, but the conclusions he arrives at are plausible), that some unhappy love experience or experiences are the basis for his youthful poetry. Storm does not yet appreciate the "nature" of his own country. The sea, the landscape of the coast, the heath, the moor do not appear, or are conventionalized. There are indications of mastery, but not full mastery. There is a wavering between the pompous and the simple style. His youthful verses reveal the influence of Eichendorff's treatment of nature, of Heine's "Weltschmerz" and most significantly Mörike's simplicity and restraint of passion.

In the period of 1843-1853 Storm becomes engaged to Constanze Esmarch (1844). The "unhappy love" theme disappears and the joy of being united with the loved one takes its place. There is left the quality of voluptuousness in his poems; it has become finer and more delicate. There is intense realism in a description he gives of death. Politics does not move him to write verses. His individualization of nature stamps this period more than anything else. His poetry is "Küstenpoesie," his favorite flower is the rose, in his descriptions are found swallows, the stork, insects, the fog. The sun appeals to him more than the sentimental moon and winter does not inspire him to write. Brevity is one of the

marked characteristics of his style. The influence of Heine has decreased, that of Mörike has increased.

1853-1868 Storm is in exile. Most of his time is taken up with his lawyer's work. During this period of banishment from his beloved fatherland the political poems grow out of inner necessity; they are, as he himself says, "absichtslos aus innerm Drange entstanden." But in his relation to nature he could not find the strong emotional impulses which he needed for lyric composition. He was separated from the nature he knew. When the stimulus was gone his poetry ceased. Hermann notes another interesting fact. As Storm gradually lost the sense of smell, we find also a falling off of descriptions dealing with the sense of smell.

The mood out of which the lyric poetry of his old age grows is expressed in the words of one of his stories. "Hu! Wie kommen und gehen die Menschen! Immer ein neuer Schub, und wieder: Fertig!—Rastlos kehrt und kehrt der unsichtbare Besen und kann kein Ende finden. Woher kommt all das immer wieder, und wohin geht der graue Kehricht? Auch, auch die zertretenen Rosen liegen dazwischen." During this period there are examples of almost brutal realism.

The two chapters on the theory of the lyric and Storm's creative method are a disappointment, because they are not treated sympathetically and synthetically enough. We glean the following points from H.'s treatise. For Storm 1) lyric poetry is the expression of a "seelenstimmung"; 2) Experience must be the basis for creative work; 3) Universality is demanded, that is, the beautiful; the characteristic and the ugly are all worthy of representation; 4) Abnormal, pathological materials are excluded; 5) The form, i. e. the moulding of the material into form is more important than the material.

Storm's method is briefly this: He uses an insignificant experience as a starting point or he combines two entirely separate experiences. Under the stress of emotion he uses the lyric form. The time which elapses between his experience and the lyric composition is very brief. Then there may follow a period of careful nurture. So that Fontane was not wrong when he said the adjective "Stormsch" stood for fastidiousness and exquisite workmanship.

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